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PROBABLE SOVIET RESPONSE TO THE RATIFICATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Soviet courses of action in the event of ratification of the Paris Agreements.

CONCLUSIONS

1. We believe that the Soviet leaders would regard the rearmament of West Germany and its inclusion in NATO as a serious potential threat to their own security. They probably doubt that West German military forces would be kept within the proposed limits, and probably recognize that the net increase in the strength of the military combination which the USSR confronts in Europe would be greater than indicated by the simple addition of a particular number of West German divisions. On the other hand, the Soviet leaders probably estimate that it would require about three years to complete the proposed rearmament program in West Germany. They would probably consider, therefore, that the potential threat involved in West German rearmament would not emerge at an early date and that there would remain time for possible counterbalancing developments. *(Paras. 6–11)*

2. We believe it unlikely, therefore, that the initial Soviet response to ratification of the Paris Agreements would be based on the assumption that the security of the USSR was immediately endangered. We believe that the USSR would take measures to improve its military position, including the strengthening of East German and Satellite forces in connection with the formal establishment of an Eastern European security organization. It would employ all political and subversive means to prevent or impede rearmament in West Germany, and to obstruct its cooperation with its Western partners. It would attempt to make gains elsewhere, under conditions of limited risk, in order partially to offset the accretion to Western strength resulting from German rearmament. In conjunction with this general line of strategy, we believe that the USSR might adopt, for a time, a more menacing posture, including harassment of the Western allies in Berlin and Austria. We believe, however, that the Soviet leaders would be concerned not to allow any increase of international tensions arising from such demonstrations to get out of hand. We believe that the USSR would be willing, after an interval, to negotiate further on Germany, but

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4. It is possible that the Soviet leaders may at any time decide that they cannot adequately offset the developing threat of German rearmament. In this case, they would be confronted with two broad alternatives: (a) to undertake an early showdown with the Western Powers on this subject, possibly including the use of force involving grave risks of general war; (b) to attempt to negotiate a settlement in which both Western and Soviet troops would be withdrawn and a reunified Germany would be neutralized with controlled armaments. We believe the USSR would reject the first alternative as too hazardous a gamble under currently prevailing circumstances. In view of the grave disadvantages entailed, we believe the second alternative is only a possibility, but it might be adopted if the Soviet leaders believed it offered the only means, short of general war, to prevent the development of a critical threat to the security of the USSR. We believe, however, that the Kremlin would be more likely to adopt the courses of action described in paragraph 3. *(Paras. 21–25)*

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would be highly unlikely to agree to German unification on terms acceptable to the West. *(Paras. 12-18)*

3. If at any stage in the process of implementing the Paris Agreements the various courses of action described above did not, in the Soviet view, sufficiently offset the developing threat of German rearmament, we believe the Soviet leaders would almost certainly take further measures in the attempt to counter this accretion to the strength of the West. These measures would include primarily a sharp build-up of Soviet and Satellite military capabilities. They might also include more threatening courses of action against Berlin, or in the Far East, or elsewhere, with the purpose of arousing fear of nuclear war in the West and causing Western peoples to demand that their governments follow a cautious policy. We believe that, at this stage, the USSR would adopt bolder courses of action than it had previously, but would avoid those which in its judgment clearly entailed the probability of general war *(Para. 20)*

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DISCUSSION

I. ROLE OF GERMANY IN POSTWAR SOVIET POLICY

5. The role that a restored Germany would eventually come to play in Europe has been a key issue in the postwar power struggle between the USSR and the Western Powers. Despite the tremendous postwar growth of Soviet power compared with that of Germany, Soviet fear of Germany, sustained by the memory of Nazi aggression, has remained a powerful force. Soviet policy in Europe since 1945 has been designed to prevent any German settlement which would permit the alignment of a rearmed Germany on the side of the Western Powers. This policy has apparently been based on a belief that the addition of German power to the Western alliance would constitute a serious blow to Soviet prestige, would seriously hamper further Communist expansion in Europe, threaten Soviet control over the Satellites, and perhaps even jeopardize the security of the USSR. The rearmament of even West Germany and its inclusion in the NATO alliance is almost certainly viewed by the Soviet leaders in a perspective of such risks and dangers.

II. PROBABLE SOVIET ESTIMATE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RATIFICATION

6. We believe that the Soviet leaders would regard the rearmament of West Germany and

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